

Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

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## DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

14 June 1984

Eastern Europe: Financial Situation  
and Outlook in 1983-84

## Summary

Eastern Europe is recovering from its severe financial crisis. Last year the region posted its second consecutive hard currency trade surplus and its first current account surplus in more than a decade. Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania cut their net hard currency debt by an average of 13 percent, and the region as a whole built up foreign exchange reserves by 22 percent. Much of the improvement stemmed from continued belt-tightening. Imports declined for the third consecutive year, albeit not as dramatically as during the previous two years. Eastern Europe's financial position also was helped by loans from the IMF and World Bank, rescheduling agreements with private and official creditors, and some revival of commercial lending for the more creditworthy countries. [redacted]

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The pace of improvement seems to be quickening in 1984. Excluding Poland, Eastern Europe's financing requirements will decline by about 15 percent this year. Prospects for new credits seem better than at any time in the last four years. While most of the upswing in lending consists of short-term, trade-related credits, Hungary and East Germany have already raised medium-term syndications, and a small Eurodollar loan may be arranged for Czechoslovakia later this year. Poland has negotiated terms for a multiyear

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rescheduling with banks and may break the logjam on a Paris Club rescheduling by the end of the year. Yugoslavia has arranged refinancing with private and official creditors, and Romania seems likely to avoid a rescheduling for the first time in three years. [ ]

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Despite its recovery from the 1981-82 crisis, Eastern Europe still faces long-term trade and financial problems. Although the improved lending climate and economic recovery in the West will likely produce the first increase in East-West trade since 1980, the growth of trade will fall far short of the double-digit pace common in the 1970s. Since the inflow of credits will not be large, the region will again have to run sizable trade and current account surpluses. Even with additional reschedulings, Poland almost certainly will be unable to close its financial gap, and the regime seems unwilling to impose the tough adjustment measures needed to restore creditworthiness. Yugoslavia will likely need more debt relief in the next few years. The drastic import cuts imposed by Romania have drained the economy, and the possibility of a Romanian rescheduling in 1985 cannot be excluded. The financial recoveries of East Germany and Hungary seem more solid, but both countries must continue to cover large financing requirements. [ ]

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A number of economic and political factors still weigh against Eastern Europe in the risk assessments of Western lenders. To resume economic growth and maintain external balance, Eastern Europe must do more to improve its export performance. Many creditors regard the sharp import reductions of the past few years as a short-run expedient with little impact on long-term creditworthiness. Many bankers, still skeptical that the East Europeans will do much to correct fundamental problems, will be examining more closely than in the past the economic policy and performance of individual countries. Creditor confidence could also be undermined by further cooling in the East-West political climate or outbreaks of unrest. [ ]

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Regional OverviewPerformance in 1983

Eastern Europe's financial position began to improve in 1983 following the severe difficulties of the previous two years. The region posted a hard currency trade surplus of \$4.3 billion, more than double the surplus of 1982 and a sharp reversal of the \$3.7-billion deficit recorded in 1981 (see Table 1). The region pared hard currency imports by about 4.7 percent last year, a much less severe cutback than the 15-percent reductions in both 1981 and 1982. The first increase in exports since 1980--due largely to resales of Middle Eastern oil--helped limit import reductions. The trade surplus, along with lower interest payments, helped produce a \$2.2-billion current account surplus for the region, compared with the \$1.9-billion deficit of a year earlier. [ ]

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Current account surpluses helped most countries reduce their net hard currency debt for the second consecutive year (see Table 2).<sup>1</sup> Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and Romania cut their net debt by an average of 13 percent. Foreign exchange reserves grew by 22 percent regionwide, nearly offsetting the precipitous drop that occurred in 1982 at the height of the credit crunch. Only the increase in Poland's net debt, mainly the result of interest arrearages to Western official creditors rather than new credits, prevented more than a marginal decline in the region's net debt. [ ]

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Eastern Europe's financial position was helped by support

<sup>1</sup> Some of the debt reduction was only nominal, reflecting the depreciation of the non-dollar component of the debt against the dollar, and did not represent an actual liquidation of obligations. [ ]

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Eastern Europe: Hard Currency Trade  
(Million US\$)

Table 1

	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984 <sup>a</sup>
<u>Exports -- Total</u>	<u>33,339</u>	<u>38,830</u>	<u>37,387</u>	<u>36,438</u>	<u>37,379</u>	<u>39,975</u>
Bulgaria	2,335	3,021	3,198	3,298	2,879	2,900
Czechoslovakia	3,734	4,597	4,691	4,357	4,142	4,275
East Germany	4,541	6,565	6,714	7,172	7,600	8,000
Hungary	4,063	4,911	4,877	4,876	4,847	5,000
Poland	6,350	7,506	4,971	4,974	5,402	6,200
Romania	5,522	6,574	7,216	6,235	6,238	6,600
Yugoslavia	6,794	5,656	5,720	5,526	6,271	7,000
<u>Imports -- Total</u>	<u>45,214</u>	<u>47,302</u>	<u>41,065</u>	<u>34,695</u>	<u>33,047</u>	<u>35,550</u>
Bulgaria	1,621	2,035	2,546	2,684	2,415	2,500
Czechoslovakia	4,117	4,590	4,432	3,842	3,371	3,500
East Germany	6,566	8,145	6,654	5,663	6,300	7,050
Hungary	4,230	4,632	4,417	4,111	3,970	4,100
Poland	8,038	8,488	5,404	4,616	4,317	4,900
Romania	6,623	8,091	7,012	4,710	4,605	4,800
Yugoslavia	14,019	11,321	10,600	9,069	8,069	8,700
<u>Balance -- Total</u>	<u>-11,875</u>	<u>-8,472</u>	<u>-3,678</u>	<u>1,743</u>	<u>4,332</u>	<u>4,425</u>
Bulgaria	714	986	652	614	464	400
Czechoslovakia	-383	7	259	515	771	775
East Germany	-2,025	-1,580	60	1,509	1,300	950
Hungary	-167	279	460	765	877	900
Poland	-1,688	-982	-433	358	1,085	1,300
Romania	-1,101	-1,517	204	1,525	1,633	1,800
Yugoslavia	-7,225	-5,665	-4,880	-3,543	-1,798	-1,700

<sup>a</sup> Projections based upon announced trade plans.

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Table 2

EASTERN EUROPE: GROSS AND NET HARD CURRENCY DEBT  
AT YEAREND  
 (Million US\$)

	1980	1981	1982	1983a
<u>Eastern Europe</u>				
Gross debt	83,645	85,085	80,658	81,975
Commercial debt	61,658	59,050	53,031	48,041
Government-backed debt	18,688	21,152	21,133	26,380
IMF/IBRD/BIS	3,299	4,471	6,081	7,154
CEMA banks	--	412	413	400
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	10,054	9,838	8,239	10,065
Net debt	73,591	75,247	72,419	71,910
<u>Bulgaria</u>				
Gross debt	3,536	3,065	2,757	2,463
Commercial debt	3,201	2,695	2,292	1,968
Government-backed debt	335	370	465	495
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	779	840	1,014	1,076
Net debt	2,757	2,225	1,743	1,387
<u>Czechoslovakia</u>				
Gross debt	4,926	4,508	4,053	3,707
Commercial debt	4,066	3,703	3,118	2,732
Government-backed debt	860	805	935	975
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	1,256	1,105	742	985
Net debt	3,670	3,403	3,311	2,722
<u>East Germany</u>				
Gross debt	14,098	14,863	13,039	12,630
Commercial debt	11,253	11,583	9,489	8,510
Government-backed debt	2,845	3,280	3,550	4,120
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	2,506	2,596	2,321	3,597
Net debt	11,592	12,267	10,718	9,033
<u>Hungary</u>				
Gross debt	9,090	8,699	7,715	8,250
Commercial debt	8,790	8,334	6,955	6,940
Government-backed debt	300	365	525	740
IMF/IBRD/BIS	--	--	235	570
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	2,090	1,652	1,151	1,518
Net debt	7,000	7,047	6,564	6,732
<u>Poland</u>				
Gross debt	25,000	25,453	24,840	26,400
Commercial debt	14,900	14,188	13,660	10,900
Government-backed debt	10,100	11,265	11,180	15,500
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	650	775	1,045	1,150
Net debt	24,350	24,678	23,795	25,250

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	1980	1981	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>
<u>Romania</u>				
Gross debt	9,387	10,160	9,766	9,000
Commercial debt	6,537	6,167	5,409	4,900
Government-backed debt	1,670	1,845	1,428	900
IMF/IBRD/BIS	1,180	1,736	2,516	2,800
CEMA banks	--	412	413	400
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	300	345	370	250
Net debt	9,087	9,815	9,396	8,750
<u>Yugoslavia</u>				
Gross debt	17,608	18,337	18,488	19,525
Commercial debt	12,911	12,380	12,108	12,091
Government-backed debt	2,578	3,222	3,050	3,650
IMF/IBRD	2,119	2,735	3,330	3,784
Reserves <sup>b</sup>	2,473	2,252	1,596	1,489
Net debt	15,135	15,812	16,892	18,036

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a Preliminary estimate  
b Excludes gold holdings

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from international institutions and by generally improved relations with Western creditors. Loans from the IMF and World Bank encouraged Western bankers to provide nearly \$500 million in syndicated loans to Hungary. A \$400-million government-guaranteed bank loan from West Germany helped revive lending to East Germany. East Germany and Hungary, which together had suffered a nearly \$4-billion loss in bank credit lines between December 1981 and June 1983,  25X1

increased total borrowings by \$500 million during the last half of 1983. In contrast with 1982, Romania quickly negotiated rescheduling agreements with Western banks and governments. Negotiations proved difficult for Poland and Yugoslavia, but both countries eventually obtained favorable rescheduling terms from Western banks. Yugoslavia also secured a package of new credits from the banks, Western governments, the IMF, and the World Bank.  25X1

Improvements in Eastern Europe's hard currency balances were even more impressive given the economic pressures applied by the Soviet Union. The terms-of-trade continued to move in Moscow's favor last year, forcing the East Europeans to export a greater volume of goods to the Soviet Union just to maintain existing import volumes. In addition, Moscow apparently stepped up its pressure on some of its Warsaw Pact allies to improve their bilateral trade balances after a decade of allowing them to run large deficits. Last year Eastern Europe's trade deficit with Moscow declined by \$560 million, with the largest cuts made by East Germany, Poland, and Bulgaria.  25X1



Improvement Continues in 1984

The momentum generated by Eastern Europe in 1983 appears to be carrying over to 1984. Excluding Poland, Eastern Europe's financing requirements will drop an estimated 15 percent this year. The increase in reserves and the reduction in short-term debt have improved the liquidity position of most countries. Debt service ratios have improved for all countries except Poland and Yugoslavia due to lower interest rates and a decline in scheduled debt repayments. (see Table 3).

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Prospects for new borrowing seem better than at any time in the last four years. Eastern Europe's standing with bankers appears to be rising because of trade and current account surpluses. Hungary and East Germany have raised medium-term syndications in the first half of 1984, and Czechoslovakia may come to the market later this year. Because of continuing unease about the financial outlook for many LDCs, bankers seem to be looking for profitable opportunities to lend to those East European countries that apparently have weathered the debt crisis.

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Bankers, nonetheless, remain cautious and are limiting most lending to short-term, trade-related credits carrying higher interest spreads than in the past. Private lenders are reluctant to increase exposure significantly unless backed by Western government guarantees. The East Europeans seem equally cautious about new borrowing, with some regimes deliberately planning to run current account surpluses to reduce debts further. Most of the medium-term, untied money secured this year will be in the

## EASTERN EUROPE: SELECTED FINANCIAL INDICATORS

TABLE 3

	Proportion of Bank Loans with Less than 1 year maturity (Percent)					Reserves as a Share of Debt Maturing in One Year (Percent)				
	1979 <sup>a</sup>	1980 <sup>a</sup>	1981 <sup>a</sup>	1982 <sup>a</sup>	1983 <sup>b</sup>	1979 <sup>a</sup>	1980 <sup>a</sup>	1981 <sup>a</sup>	1982 <sup>a</sup>	1983 <sup>c</sup>
Eastern Europe	39.9	36.3	37.0	34.0	33.6	28.8	29.0	28.1	23.1	27.0
Bulgaria	41.1	36.3	48.1	51.7	52.8	31.0	53.5	59.4	90.1	123.2
Czechoslovakia	47.1	43.1	37.6	31.2	32.8	46.8	65.3	67.8	55.8	95.6
East Germany	42.7	38.6	42.6	39.0	38.8	46.7	45.2	42.3	48.2	68.6
Hungary	47.4	42.9	40.4	33.2	36.0	27.2	34.0	25.0	29.0	31.7
Poland	39.1	33.1	36.1	32.8	29.3	14.7	7.5	9.7	9.0	7.2
Romania	50.5	42.7	35.3	38.9	32.8	9.6	9.4	8.9	9.5	16.7
Yugoslavia <sup>e</sup>	22.6	28.1	28.4	26.7	30.0	46.3	36.9	38.3	18.0	23.8

	Undisbursed Bank Commitments as a Share of Outstanding Debt (Percent)					Debt Service Ratios (Percent) <sup>d</sup>				
	1979 <sup>a</sup>	1980 <sup>a</sup>	1981 <sup>a</sup>	1982 <sup>a</sup>	1983 <sup>b</sup>	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983
Eastern Europe	16.5	17.4	11.7	8.4	7.5	36.7	39.9	48.7	56.7	61.0
Bulgaria	8.4	16.7	24.5	15.5	18.3	33.7	32.5	33.9	26.9	22.1
Czechoslovakia	9.7	8.3	6.7	10.4	9.7	20.6	21.8	20.1	19.4	17.8
East Germany	16.5	15.2	16.2	13.3	11.1	44.6	43.9	51.6	53.2	45.9
Hungary	5.2	8.4	4.6	7.2	5.5	33.1	30.9	32.7	33.0	30.7
Poland	24.6	23.9	11.8	4.8	4.3	86.0	97.1	174.6	214.6	245.7
Romania	18.3	18.2	9.4	9.8	9.0	21.1	25.6	27.4	45.3	31.5
Yugoslavia	23.8	19.0	11.9	7.5	6.7	20.2	22.8	26.4	28.4	33.8

a

At yearend.

b

At midyear.

c

Preliminary estimate at yearend.

d

Repayments of medium- and long-term debt and interest payments on gross debt as a share of current account earnings.

e

Reserves held by the National Bank of Yugoslavia.

form of IMF loans for Hungary and Yugoslavia; the completed or planned commercial syndications generally are tied to trade and project financing. Because the inflow of credits probably will be small, we expect the region again to run a sizable trade surplus of roughly \$4.4 billion and a current account surplus of \$3.4 billion.

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Trade turnover with the West--exports plus imports--will pick up for the first time since 1980. Economic recovery in the West will increase East European exports, which--coupled with moderately more financing--will allow most regimes to ease import curbs. Even so, hard currency trade is unlikely to increase at the double-digit pace common in the 1970s. Hard currency sales probably will increase by around 7 percent while import growth should approach 8 percent.

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#### Long-term Problems

Despite its relatively quick recovery from the 1981-82 credit crunch, Eastern Europe still faces long-term trade and financial problems. The East Europeans cannot continue to rely on import restraints to achieve trade and current account surpluses; strong export gains are imperative if the region is to attain economic growth and external balance. The regimes, however, have done little to correct longstanding problems with competitiveness, and the sizable cuts in imports of Western capital goods is widening the technology gap between Eastern Europe and the developed West. Growing Soviet demands for more and better goods from Eastern Europe may also limit the region's ability to sell in hard currency markets. Financial problems in

developing countries not only have hurt East European sales to those countries, but also have made the Third World a more aggressive competitor in developed country markets.

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And even with the recent debt reductions, debt service obligations will remain large for most countries. Increases in international interest rates will burden current account performance. The reluctance of lenders to increase their medium- and long-term exposure will leave Eastern Europe vulnerable to rapid reductions in short-term credit lines as occurred in early 1982. The breathing space given by debt reschedulings for Poland, Romania, and Yugoslavia will expire in the next few years, forcing these countries to repay their obligations, refinance them with new loans, or negotiate new rescheduling terms.

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The warming of relations between Western lenders and several East European countries will likely be limited. The debt crisis of 1981-82 has changed bankers' long-term thinking about Eastern Europe. The banks can no longer point to Eastern Europe's financial conservatism and unblemished payments record, and they have learned that they cannot trust in Soviet financial support as adequate protection for lending to the region. Instead of making blanket judgments about the area's creditworthiness, bankers are likely to draw sharper distinctions among the countries on the basis of economic policy, performance, and prospects.

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As a prerequisite for increased lending, bankers will likely look for evidence that the East Europeans are making structural

look for evidence that the East Europeans are making structural changes to improve trade performance. Many creditors regard sharp import reductions as a short-run expedient with little positive impact on long-term creditworthiness. Some bankers consider the Western recession as only one factor in the disappointing export performance in recent years, and they remain skeptical that the East Europeans will or can do much to correct their fundamental problems.

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Political developments, as in the past, could again influence borrowing prospects. Any further cooling in the East-West political climate or outbreaks of unrest or violence could undermine creditor confidence. Threats to political stability could result from popular reaction to the pinch of austerity measures or from struggles over succession, and problems in one country could spill over and poison lenders' attitudes about the whole region.

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#### Individual Country Performance

The following sections summarize the recent financial performance of the individual countries and discuss their longer-term prospects.

#### Poland

Warsaw continued last year to pursue a policy of limited adjustment by running a trade surplus large enough to meet the minimum demands of its creditors but not so great as to strain the beleaguered economy and risk unrest. Warsaw ran a record

trade surplus of \$1.1 billion as exports jumped 9 percent and imports fell 9 percent. Nonetheless this surplus, coupled with other service earnings of \$400 million (net), fell far short of the \$3.3 billion owed in interest (see Table 4). As a result Warsaw slipped even further behind in meeting its debt repayments.

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New credits and debt relief from banks covered little more than \$2 billion of Warsaw's \$15 billion financing requirement, which included almost \$7 billion in arrears from 1982. Credit availability continued to decline as lines extended before 1982 were nearly exhausted. Warsaw was able to draw only \$565 million in new money--about half in trade credits from Libya and China--plus \$338 million in trade credits available from the 1982 and 1983 bank rescheduling agreements. Western banks agreed to reschedule \$1.2 billion in principal--95 percent of the payments due in 1983--until 1988-1992. The banks agreed to relend 65 percent of the interest due on original loan contracts as short-term credits to finance imports for Warsaw's export industries.

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Poland's large financial gap resulted primarily from failure to conclude a debt rescheduling with the Paris Club. Western government creditors, who had suspended debt rescheduling talks in January 1982 following Warsaw's imposition of martial law, agreed in principle in mid-1983 to negotiate debt relief and sent a technical team to Poland. The opportunity for progress was lost in November, however, when Polish officials made their first appearance at the Paris Club in two years and asked for a

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Table 4

POLAND: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing requirement</u>	<u>10,788</u>	<u>14,592</u>	<u>15,805</u>
Current account balance	-3,039	-1,807	-760
Trade account balance	358	1,085	1,300
Exports	4,974	5,402	6,200
Imports	4,616	4,317	4,900
Interest <sup>c</sup>	-3,799	-3,299	-2,560
Other net invisibles, (excluding interest)	402	407	500
Repayments of medium- and long-term debt due	-7,061	-5,447	-4,045
Paris Club creditors	2,573	1,825	1,808
Banks	2,442 <sup>d</sup>	1,436 <sup>d</sup>	619
Other creditors	2,046	2,286	1,618
Repayments of short-term debt due	-110	263	0
Arrearages from previous year	-573	-6,906	-10,800 <sup>f</sup>
Net credit extended	-5	-69	-200
<u>Financing Sources</u>	<u>3,882</u>	<u>2,103</u>	<u>7,900</u>
Credits	1,670	903	600
Debt relief	2,050 <sup>e</sup>	1,200	7,300
Other	162	0	0
<u>Arrears/gap</u>	<u>6,906</u>	<u>12,489</u>	<u>7,905</u>

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary<sup>b</sup> Projection<sup>c</sup> Amounts are for interest due rather than interest paid. Because Poland has not paid all interest due, the figures for interest and the current account deficits overstate the hard currency outflows.<sup>d</sup> Includes principal payments deferred until the following year under the bank rescheduling agreements for 1981 and 1982.<sup>e</sup> Includes interest deferred until 1983 under the 1982 bank agreement.<sup>f</sup> Arrearages at the end of 1983 [redacted] The total is not consistent with the \$12.5 billion total we compute from data and estimates of current account performance, obligations due, payments made, new credits and reschedulings.

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comprehensive package including generous debt relief, new credits, and IMF membership. The creditors responded that IMF membership and new credits were outside the scope of the Paris Club, and that further debt relief could not be provided until Poland met unpaid obligations under the 1981 rescheduling agreement.

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The financial outlook appears marginally better in 1984 because of prospects for a larger trade surplus and resumption of debt negotiations with the Paris Club. Poland owes about \$16 billion this year, two-thirds of which represents payments overdue from as long ago as 1981. The current account deficit could fall below \$800 million as interest payments drop to around \$2.6 billion and if Warsaw achieves another record trade surplus as anticipated. Exports and imports are projected to increase by 20 percent and 14 percent, respectively. First quarter statistics suggest that the projected \$1.3 billion trade surplus is reachable.

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The likelihood of new credits remains slim. Polish officials hope for over \$2 billion in new credits this year, but they have acknowledged that they received only \$90 million in the first quarter. Warsaw is more likely to receive around \$600 million this year, including new money coming out of rescheduling agreements.

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After three years of rescheduling, roughly three-fourths of Warsaw's debt to Western banks has now been rescheduled. About \$600 million in principal is due this year, well below the levels of the past two years. This relatively small sum encouraged the



banks to negotiate a multiyear rescheduling on the following terms:

- rescheduling over ten years of 95 percent of principal payments due from 1984 through 1987, including a grace period of five years;
- an interest rate of 1 3/4 percentage points over LIBOR on rescheduled obligations;
- payment in 1984 of the remaining 5 percent of principal, a 1-percent fee, and interest due this year on all of the debt to be rescheduled.

The banks also agreed to extend more new credits. This facility may prove to be the chief hurdle to a scheduled July signing because some banks may oppose this new loan arrangement.  25X1

The Paris Club is showing signs of breaking its stalemate with Warsaw. In May, the Poles finally consented to pay both the arrears on the rescheduled debt from 1981 as well as non-rescheduled obligations owed the United States, with the first installment of \$122 million due at the end of the month. If all proceeds on schedule, rescheduling talks could begin in July. These negotiations would most likely focus on rescheduling debts that fell due in 1982-83.  25X1

If the Paris Club agrees to reschedule 95 percent of principal and interest due in 1982-83, debt relief from official and private creditors could amount to \$7.3 billion this year. Added to new credits of around \$600 million, total financing sources would climb to \$7.9 billion. This would still leave a gap of \$7.9 billion, including \$2.7 billion due Paris Club

creditors in 1984 under original loan contracts. Excluding the remaining Paris Club obligations, Poland's arrearages would total \$5.2 billion. This is probably a maximum estimate, as some of these debts may have been paid. Moreover, the remaining creditors--largely individual companies, LDCs, and CEMA banks--are not an organized faction that has been able to exert much pressure on Warsaw.

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Even if the reschedulings progress this year, Warsaw will still face unmanageable financing requirements for years to come. In 1985 Poland will confront a formidable debt maturity structure, despite four years of debt relief. Not only will further reschedulings be necessary, creditors almost certainly will have to renegotiate agreements already concluded.

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### Romania

In narrow financial terms, Romania's turnaround has been the greatest in Eastern Europe and one of the most dramatic among all problem debtors. Bucharest has run sizable surpluses in its hard currency accounts the past two years in contrast to the large deficits recorded between 1977 and 1981. The current account surplus climbed to over \$900 million in 1983--up from \$655 million a year earlier (see Table 5). These gains stem almost entirely from tight import curbs that enabled Bucharest to run trade surpluses in both years exceeding \$1.5 billion. The current account surplus in 1983 allowed Romania to reduce its net hard currency debt by nearly \$646 million from the 1982 level of \$9.4 billion.

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Table 5

ROMANIA: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 1984

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing requirement</u>	<u>3,820</u>	<u>1,998</u>	<u>710</u>
Current account balance	655	902	1,000
Trade account balance	1,525	1,633	1,800
Exports	6,235	6,238	6,600
Imports	-4,710	-4,605	-4,800
Net interest	-917	-725	-730
Other services	47	-6	-70
Debt Repayments	-2,830	-2,219	-1,528
Medium- and long-term	-2,081	-1,263	-1,190
Short term	-749	-956	-338
Net credits extended	-502	-293	-182
Arrears from previous year	-1,143	-388	0
<u>Financing sources</u>	<u>3,316</u>	<u>1,876</u>	<u>755</u>
Credits	1,591	1,056	560
Medium- and long-term	334	586	220
Short term	956	338	300
IMF, net	301	132	40
Debt relief	1,700	749	0
Change in reserves (-Increase)	25	71	195
<u>Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>116</u>	<u>122</u>	<u>-45</u>
<u>Financing gap/arrears</u>	<u>388</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

a Preliminary

b Projected

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Despite the improved current account, debt relief from Western banks and governments was needed again in 1983.

Bucharest's rescheduling efforts proceeded more smoothly than the 1982 negotiations. As early as February 1983, Romania and major Western banks had agreed on terms, albeit tougher than those of 1982: only 70 percent of some \$900 million in principal payments to banks were rescheduled instead of the 80 percent in 1982, and short-term debt was not covered. The Paris Club agreed to reschedule 60 percent of principal due in 1983 on medium and long-term guaranteed credits.

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Romania so far has made good on its goal of avoiding a rescheduling this year. A hard currency trade surplus of \$1.8 billion is projected--assuming growth of about 4-percent in both exports and imports--and debt service obligations are lower. Romania, however, must cope with the cancellation of the final tranche of its 1981 IMF standby arrangement (worth nearly \$300 million) because of noncompliance with some key aspects of its stabilization program. The Romanians have expressed interest in obtaining a new standby arrangement, but so far no formal request has been made. In addition, bankers remain very cool about resuming lending to Romania.

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Romania's financial progress has been costly and may be short-lived. The huge trade surpluses--primarily the result of a 42-percent drop in imports in 1981-82--have drained the economy and damaged the outlook for genuine recovery. Investment fell over 10 percent in 1981-82, and the officially acknowledged drop in consumption in 1982 was the first decline since World

War II. In addition, industrial production growth has averaged a little over 1-percent the last three years, which is the slowest growth in the postwar era. [ ]

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The breathing space associated with rescheduling ends in 1985 when Bucharest must begin to repay obligations rescheduled in 1981. Total repayments of medium- and long-term debt, including IMF repurchases, are scheduled to climb to almost \$1.7 billion. The Ceausescu regime likely will respond to the pressure of covering its external obligations by continuing to earn large trade surpluses rather than deal with underlying economic problems that hurt competitiveness and prevent sustainable and balanced growth. [ ]

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### Hungary

Hungary's financial position improved in 1983 even though Budapest failed to meet all its goals. The borrowing campaign fared reasonably well, bringing in roughly \$1.2 billion in medium-term loans (see Table 6). In addition to \$352 million in IMF credits, Budapest obtained a \$200-million three-year club loan from Western banks, \$239 million in project credits from the World Bank, a \$275-million commercial loan to cofinance World Bank projects, and increased trade credits. A surge in short-term borrowings late in the year helped boost gold and foreign exchange reserves by \$600 million. The major disappointment was that the trade surplus reached only \$877 million and the current account surplus only \$297 million. Overly buoyant domestic demand bears some of the blame, but depressed export prices and a

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Table 6

HUNGARY: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing requirement</u>	<u>4,198</u>	<u>3,048</u>	<u>3,351</u>
Current account balance	-63	297	400
Trade balance	766	877	900
Exports	4,876	4,847	5,000
Imports	4,110	3,970	4,100
Net interest	-976	-662	-580
Other net invisibles	147	82	80
Repayment of medium- and long-term debt	-894	-1,216	-1,534
Repayment of short-term debt	-2,849	-1,764	-2,123
Net credits extended	-192	-65	-94
BIS	-200	-300	0
<u>Financing sources</u>	<u>4,244</u>	<u>3,151</u>	<u>3,251</u>
Credits	3,663	3,751	3,240
Medium - and long-term	1,154	1,276	1,100
Short-term	1,764	2,123	1,700
IMF, net	235	352	440
BIS	510	0	0
Change in reserves (- increase)	581	-600	-11
<u>Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>-46</u>	<u>-103</u>	<u>100</u>

a Preliminary  
b Projected

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substandard grain harvest also kept export gains well below the original goal.

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Unlike other East European countries, Hungary is again counting heavily on medium-term bank loans to cover much of its 1984 financing requirement. Budapest faces \$1.5 billion in medium- and long-term debt repayments--up from \$1.2 billion in 1983--and its IMF stabilization program calls for a reduction in short-term debt to limit vulnerability to the type of liquidity crisis that occurred in 1982. While total debt repayments thus are \$800 million more than last year, Budapest plans to increase its current account surplus to only \$400 million. Hungary is obtaining some \$440 million in standby credits from the IMF, but it will need more than \$1 billion in medium- and long-term commercial financing to prevent erosion of its reserves.

25X1

This year's borrowing campaign is off to a good start and should meet the \$1.1-billion target. A \$150-million bankers' acceptance was oversubscribed--eventually reaching \$210 million--and an Arab consortium drummed up \$50 million. The World Bank has approved another \$200 million in project loans; commercial confinancing loans for these projects will likely reach \$450 million. Budapest may seek another syndication toward the end of the year to help offset any shortfall in the current account and to buttress foreign exchange reserves. Foreign exchange holdings dropped around \$400 million in the first quarter of 1984 as Budapest reduced its short-term debt in compliance with the IMF program.

25X1

Early indicators for trade and current account performance seem favorable. First-quarter hard currency exports were up 13 percent over the same period of 1983. Hard currency imports also rose--reflecting the lifting of some import restrictions--but the hard currency trade surplus still increased to \$213 million from \$150 million in the first quarter of last year. The current account was in balance in contrast to last year's first-quarter deficit, indicating that the goal of a \$400 million surplus for the year remains attainable. The Hungarians, nonetheless, must continue to record substantial increases in exports since they are obligated to remove more import restraints later this year under their IMF stabilization program. Sustained export gains are uncertain because they depend significantly on the outcome of this year's harvest.

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The success of Hungary's foreign borrowing effort has led many observers to conclude that the country is close to financial recovery. Hungary's bankers exude increased confidence and insist that a debt rescheduling would only increase borrowing costs and yield little relief in managing medium- and long-term debt.

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This optimism, however, tends to obscure important challenges facing Hungary's economic and financial managers. Budapest must cover large debt repayments in the next two years, \$1.5 billion in 1985 and \$1.2 billion in 1986. Improvements in the economy's efficiency and competitiveness are needed to increase the trade surplus. Budapest--with prodding from the IMF--is working out a new package of structural reforms to be



introduced in 1986 for the purpose of improving trade performance. Hungary's experience shows, however, that the payoff from reform is not quick. Trade prospects also depend on the willingness of Hungary's CEMA trade partners, in particular the USSR, to allow Budapest to continue running large surpluses in intra-CEMA hard currency trade. In recent years, Hungary has relied on these surpluses to offset deficits in trade with the developed West, and Budapest is concerned that the Soviets will not want to continue this practice. None of these problems foreshadow an imminent financial crisis, but Hungary's position will remain vulnerable for the next several years.

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### Yugoslavia

Belgrade's creditors recognized by early 1983 that the country could not meet its debt obligations. The IMF, which was shepherding Yugoslavia through the last year of a three-year stabilization program, pressed Western governments and banks to adopt a rescue plan for 1983 that would refinance maturing medium- and long-term credits, halt the erosion of short-term debt, and ensure enough new credits to rebuild Yugoslavia's depleted reserves. The IMF hoped--at least initially--that the refinancing package, coupled with improvement in Yugoslavia's current account, would produce a strong enough revival in commercial lending so that Yugoslavia would not require more help in 1984. The plan eventually grew into a complicated package involving new credits and refinancing:

-- Western governments pledged nearly \$1.2 billion in export

credits, financial loans, and rollovers of maturing officially-backed loans;

-- Western banks refinanced \$1.0 billion in medium-term loans for 6 years with a 3-year grace period, kept in place \$900 million in short-term credits, and extended \$600 million of new untied loans;

-- net funding from the IMF--involving the last drawings from the 1981 standby credits--and the World Bank amounted to nearly \$700 million; and

-- the Bank for International Settlements contributed \$500 million in short-term bridge loans.

25X1

Yugoslavia achieved a major improvement in its trade and current accounts in 1983 (see Table 7). Belgrade cut its trade deficit from \$3.5 billion in 1982 to \$1.8 billion in 1983 as a result of an upturn in exports and sharp cuts in imports. The delayed disbursement of credits in the refinancing package contributed to the reduction in imports, but the improvement in trade performance also resulted from the large devaluation of the dinar demanded by the IMF and Yugoslavia's success in redirecting exports from CEMA to convertible currency markets. Because of the reduced trade deficit and a revival of tourism earnings, Yugoslavia moved its current account balance from a \$1.6-billion deficit in 1982 to a nearly \$300-million surplus in 1983.

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Despite the 1983 refinancing package and improved current account, Yugoslavia will have to seek more debt relief in 1984. Belgrade faces an estimated \$3.6-billion financing requirement,

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Table 7

YUGOSLAVIA: Financing Requirement and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing Requirement</u>	<u>5,855</u>	<u>4,031</u>	<u>3,585</u>
Current account balance	-1,602	299	500
Trade account balance	-3,543	-1,798	-1,700
Exports	5,526	6,271	7,000
Imports	9,069	8,069	8,700
Net interest	-1,692	-1,489	-1,550
Other services, net	1,970	1,976	1,650
Remittances, net	1,663	1,610	2,300
Repayments of medium- and long-term debt	-1,764	-2,363	-2,745
Repayments of short-term debt <sup>c</sup>	-2,312	-1,810	-1,140
Net credits extended	-177	-157	-200
<u>Financing Sources</u>	<u>5,325</u>	<u>4,125</u>	<u>3,585</u>
Credits	4,314	4,070	4,095
Medium- and long term	1,815		250
Short-term	1,810		900
IMF, net	563	410	10
IBRD	125	280	505
Rescue Packages		2,340	2,430
Governments		790	1,190
Berne		790	390
Geneva		0	800
Banks		1,550	1,240
Other lenders		60	
Suppliers		980	
Change in reserves (-increase)	1,012	55	-510
<u>Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>530</u>	<u>-94</u>	<u>0</u>

a Preliminary

b Projected

c Includes net change in outstanding supplier credits.

25X1

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including \$2.8 billion in repayments on medium- and long-term debt. [ ] projects a current account surplus of only \$500 million for this year, leaving a large amount of maturing loans to roll over. Belgrade, however, is not yet able to resume normal borrowing on its own, and its foreign exchange reserves, which dropped \$55 million last year to under \$1 billion, give little scope for covering the financial gap. Moreover, in the IMF's view, the reserves need to be increased by \$500 million.

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[ ]

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Belgrade is making progress toward covering this year's financing requirement. First-quarter current account results indicate that the IMF's projection of a \$500-million surplus for the year is attainable. Resolution of a dispute with the IMF over pricing policies has permitted renewed disbursement of this year's \$400-million standby credit. More important, settlement of this problem paves the way for completion of refinancing packages linked to the new IMF program:

- private bankers have agreed to refinance \$1.3 billion in debts falling due this year; and
- Western governments are deferring about \$800 million in maturing credits and carrying over nearly \$400 million in unused credits from last year's package.

In addition, Belgrade is counting on over \$500 million in World Bank loans and about \$250 million in medium- and long-term loans from other sources. Finally, last year's refinancing agreement commits banks to maintain some \$900 million in short-term credit lines. [ ]

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Yugoslavia almost certainly will require additional--albeit smaller--refinancing packages after 1984. Even with increasing current account surpluses, Yugoslavia will have larger borrowing needs than it can cover in the market and will require additional debt relief. Repayments of medium- and long-term debt are around \$2.5 billion annually in 1985-86. [ ]

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Financial recovery ultimately depends on Belgrade's ability to regain the confidence of Western bankers by attacking systemic problems that contribute to the imbalance between demand and supply and encourage reliance on Western imports. To date, Belgrade's administrative controls and the IMF's prescribed tight monetary policy have not slowed inflation. Belgrade will have to work harder to restrain increases in wages, prices, and domestic credit and to improve efficiency and competitiveness through systemic reform. This would involve abandoning policies that have given primacy to regional interests over integrative market forces. In addition, policies that misallocate investment resources have been used to protect jobs by shoring up money-losing enterprises and to subordinate efficiency to political objectives. An efficient national foreign exchange market also is needed to ensure that all producers pay the true cost of foreign exchange and that those best able to use foreign resources receive hard currency. [ ]

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Despite professions of good intentions from officials and some steps in the right direction, Belgrade's capacity to overhaul its economy remains suspect. Needed adjustment policies and structural reforms may impose a higher price than society is

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willing to pay. The population is already grumbling about falling living standards, and resistance could intensify as consumption levels decline further. Differences among regions and nationalities further complicate the collective leadership's task of reaching a consensus on burdensharing policy. At the same time, a greater reliance on market forces challenges official ideology and threatens the prerogatives of powerful vested interests in the republics. Moreover, repeated disputes over the IMF stabilization program do little to inspire creditor confidence.

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#### East Germany

East Germany's financial position strengthened considerably in 1983 due to another current account surplus, increased short-term trade financing and special financial credits from West Germany, as well as new government-backed trade loans from other Western countries. Although faced with total debt repayments of more than \$4 billion, the East Germans met their obligations, reduced their gross debt to Western banks by \$400 million, and built up reserves by an estimated \$1.3 billion to a record \$3.6 billion (See Table 8). In contrast to 1982, the regime was able both to run a current account surplus and increase imports from the West.

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East Germany's trade surplus fell slightly, to \$1.3 billion, in 1983 as a result of an 11-percent increase in imports and only

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Table 8

EAST GERMANY: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing Requirement</u>	<u>4,081</u>	<u>2,935</u>	<u>2,610</u>
Current account balance	1,239	1,285	1,080
Trade account balance	1,509	1,300	950
Exports	7,172	7,600	8,000
Imports	5,663	6,300	7,050
Net interest	-1,220	-865	-820
Other net invisibles	950	850	950
Repayments of medium- and long-term debt	3,000	2,790	2,300
Repayments of short-term <sup>c</sup>	2,320	1,430	1,390
<u>Financing Sources</u>			
Credits	3,865	2,344	NA
Medium- and long-term	2,130	2,230	NA
Short-term	1,460	1,390	NA
<u>Change in reserves (-increase)</u>	<u>275</u>	<u>-1,276</u>	<u>NA</u>
<u>Net Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>216</u>	<u>591</u>	<u>NA</u>

a Preliminary

b Projected

c Includes net change in supplier credits.



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a 6-percent gain in exports.<sup>2</sup> The current account surplus remained around the \$1.3-billion level. The East Germans continued to maximize cash receipts by reselling for hard currency oil, silver, and other commodities obtained through barter arrangements with LDCs and on clearing account from West Germany.

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As in 1982, East Germany pursued a differentiated trade policy between West Germany and the other OECD countries in order to make maximum use of available import financing and to build up a convertible currency surplus. Capitalizing on West German trade credit facilities, East Germany boosted imports from West Germany by more than 30 percent during the first half of 1983 over the same period of 1982 and increased its net short-term debt to West Germany by roughly \$300 million. During the same period, the East Germans ran a \$300-million surplus with the rest of the OECD. The pattern shifted in the second half of the year when more credits became available from other Western sources. East Berlin ran a \$250-million surplus in intra-German trade through a slowdown in imports and a boost in exports and paid back most of the increase in indebtedness to West Germany. While moving into surplus with West Germany, the East Germans ran a

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surplus of only \$60 million with the rest of the OECD.

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In addition to trade financing, West Germany helped ease East Germany's liquidity problems by granting a \$400-million government-guaranteed financial credit with a 5-year maturity. Unlike other intra-German credits, this loan was in convertible currency and not tied to trade; thus, East Berlin could use the proceeds to cover debt service payments to non-German creditors. By demonstrating West Germany's financial umbrella, the loan apparently encouraged Western bankers to revive lending to East Berlin and helped improve the terms East Germany could obtain on new credits.

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Even though the likelihood of an East German rescheduling has diminished, the country will face financial pressures over the next few years. Repayments of medium- and long-term debt in 1984-85 will fall from the 1982-83 level, but at more than \$2 billion annually they will remain substantial. The East Germans must also roll over a large short-term debt. We expect smaller hard currency trade surpluses than in the past two years because East Berlin seems intent on expanding imports. Increased hard currency service receipts from West Germany will help offset some of the impact of smaller trade surpluses on the current account.

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The East Germans have been actively seeking more trade financing and have been particularly anxious to raise additional medium-term credits--including syndicated loans--in order to refurbish their credit rating and to stretch out the maturity structure of their debt. East Germany's foreign trade bank

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succeeded in raising a \$75-million credit in the Euromarkets in May. While not large, the credit represents East Germany's first medium-term untied loan since late 1981 and may open the door to more such lending.

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Western creditors, however, remain cautious and may well press East Berlin for basic economic and financial data before increasing their exposure greatly. In particular, much uncertainty surrounds East Germany's large reserve buildup. Some Western observers argue that the buildup has been funded by increased borrowing from outside the BIS area and hence East German debt has not fallen as much as BIS statistics indicate. Many bankers also seek more credible statistics on East Germany's trade and current account performance and on future debt service.

25X1

East Berlin's decision to revive imports and to press Western bankers and governments for new loans shows that East German planners still see trade with the West as an important element of their economic strategy. The regime likely will hold to a more cautious borrowing strategy than in the late 1970s, but East Germany will probably be more aggressive than Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia in seeking new loans to increase imports. Nonetheless, East Germany can no longer rely on its strategy of the 1970s that attained rapid economic growth and improvements in living standards through large resource transfers from the West.

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Czechoslovakia

In 1983 Czechoslovakia maintained its cautious policy toward hard currency imports and reduced its net debt for the second consecutive year. The foreign trade plan envisioned a modest increase in both hard currency exports and imports, but a 5-percent decline in sales led Prague to cut imports by nearly 9 percent. This resulted in trade and current account surpluses of \$771 million and \$581 million respectively, both up from their 1982 levels (see Table 9). [REDACTED]

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Czechoslovakia seems to face few borrowing problems, and its liquidity has improved. The Czechoslovaks used their current account surplus last year to add more than \$240 million to reserves in Western banks. In mid-1983 Prague raised a \$50 million medium-term club loan from Western banks. Prague's senior banker described the small credit as a "symbolic question of getting back on the Euromarkets" after the 1981-82 credit squeeze. The Czechoslovaks apparently balked at emulating Hungary's example of disclosing more information on their debt and balance of payments in return for a larger loan. [REDACTED]

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There appears to be some uncertainty about the future direction of Czechoslovakia's financial policy. In early 1984, Prague announced that it plans to pay off its debt to Western banks. [REDACTED] Czechoslovakia's net debt to banks at \$1.8 billion and said Prague intends to pay off \$600 million annually, about equal to the decline shown in BIS statistics for 1983. This seemed to reflect the leadership's frequently voiced concern that external debt provides the West

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Table 9

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing Requirement</u>	<u>1,365</u>	<u>664</u>	<u>590</u>
Current account balance	195	581	605
Trade account balance	515	771	775
Exports	4,357	4,142	4,275
Imports	3,842	3,371	3,500
Net interest	-380	-260	-250
Other net invisibles	60	70	80
Repayments of medium- and long-term debt	-320	-435	-405
Repayments of short-term debt <sup>c</sup>	-1,240	-810	-790
<u>Financing Sources</u>	<u>1,468</u>	<u>607</u>	<u>NA</u>
Credits	1,105	850	NA
Medium- and long-term	355	100	NA
Short-term	750	750	NA
Change in reserves (-increase)	363	-243	NA
<u>Net Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>-103</u>	<u>-57</u>	<u>NA</u>

<sup>a</sup> Preliminary<sup>b</sup> Projected<sup>c</sup> Includes estimated net change in supplier credits.

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with a tool for political and economic leverage. The plan, however, does not seem entirely consistent with Prague's effort to return to the Euroloan market. Moreover, a Czechoslovak banker recently indicated that Prague now has scaled back its plan for debt reduction and will permit some increase in imports of Western capital goods.

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The regime may have softened its stance against foreign borrowing in response to criticism from both Western bankers and Czechoslovak planners about its reluctance to modernize industry through greater Western imports. Prague's long-held financial conservatism has contributed to the technological decline of Czechoslovakia's industry and the stagnation of the economy. Even with economic recovery in the West, inherent weaknesses undermine export performance, permitting little if any growth in real imports. Some Czechoslovak economists have been arguing that a judiciously planned pickup in investment--using borrowed Western resources--could help modernize key industrial sectors and jolt the economy out of its doldrums. Although the leadership may now be giving more credence to these arguments, fear of the political consequences of reliance on Western credits will likely continue to dissuade the Husak regime from adopting an aggressive strategy on Western imports and borrowing.

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### Bulgaria

Sofia's relatively low debt and lack of dependence on the West paid off during Eastern Europe's credit crunch. Creditors seemed less anxious to reduce their exposure to Bulgaria than to

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the rest of Eastern Europe. Although bank claims dropped somewhat, the decline probably reflected Sofia's policies as much as banks' efforts to reduce exposure. Not only was the bank pullout less severe for Bulgaria, but the country faced minimal financing requirements as its low debt and comfortable maturity structure resulted in small repayments. [ ]

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Bulgaria--along with Czechoslovakia--remains in the strongest financial position of any East European country. Several consecutive years of current account surpluses have enabled Sofia to cut its gross debt to about \$2.5 billion at the end of 1983 and to build up reserves of \$1.1 billion, enough to cover over five months' worth of imports. Creditors continue to give high marks to Sofia's financial conservatism. [ ]

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Bulgaria's financial strength allows it a range of options in managing its hard currency accounts. It could maintain its policy of holding down imports and reducing its debt even further. Or Sofia could use the cushion provided by the conservatism of recent years to pursue an expansion of hard currency imports. Some reports suggested that Bulgaria was considering the latter option as Sofia was interested in negotiating contracts for Western equipment and technology needed to modernize its industry. [ ]

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Trade performance in 1983, however, shows that Sofia still chose to limit hard currency imports in order to maintain healthy trade and current account surpluses (see Table 10). Imports from non-socialist countries were down 10 percent from the 1982 level. The decision to reduce imports probably was driven by the

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Table 10

BULGARIA: Financing Requirements and Sources  
1982 - 84

(Million US\$)

	1982	1983 <sup>a</sup>	1984 <sup>b</sup>
<u>Financing Requirement</u>	<u>811</u>	<u>816</u>	<u>650</u>
Current account balance	669	624	600
Trade account balance	614	464	400
Exports	3,298	2,879	2,900
Imports	2,684	2,415	2,500
Net interest	-215	-130	-120
Other net invisibles	270	290	320
Repayments of medium- and long-term debt	-640	-510	-490
Repayments of short-term debt <sup>c</sup>	-840	-930	-760
<u>Financing Sources</u>	<u>996</u>	<u>1,083</u>	<u>NA</u>
Credits	1,170	1,145	NA
Medium- and long-term	270	385	NA
Short-term	900	760	NA
Change in reserves (-increase)	-174	-62	NA
<u>Net Errors and Omissions</u>	<u>-185</u>	<u>-267</u>	<u>NA</u>

a Preliminary

b Projected

c Includes net change in outstanding supplier credits.

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13-percent drop in exports to the West. Sales were off significantly to Iran, Iraq, and Libya, which rank among Sofia's largest hard currency trading partners. Bulgaria ended the year with a trade surplus of \$464 million, down \$150 million from a year earlier. The current account surplus was \$624 million, compared to \$669 in 1982.

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Plans for modest expansion of trade with the West may have greater impact down the road if Bulgarian exports recover. Sofia, however, cannot count on large export gains because Bulgaria is not very competitive in developed country markets and must rely on Third World customers who are struggling with debt problems. Sofia probably could finance a larger volume of imports because of its good standing with bankers. The regime, however, will probably keep a close eye on its balance-of-payments performance and will not allow a repetition of the comparatively large deficits that occurred in the mid-1970s.

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